A LADYBIRD 'EASY-READING' BOOK

'WELL-LOVED TALES'

Rapunzel

With full-colour illustrations and simple text; this book tells the well-loved story of Rapunzel.

It is a book which younger children will enjoy having read to them, and which will encourage older children to gain extra reading practice.

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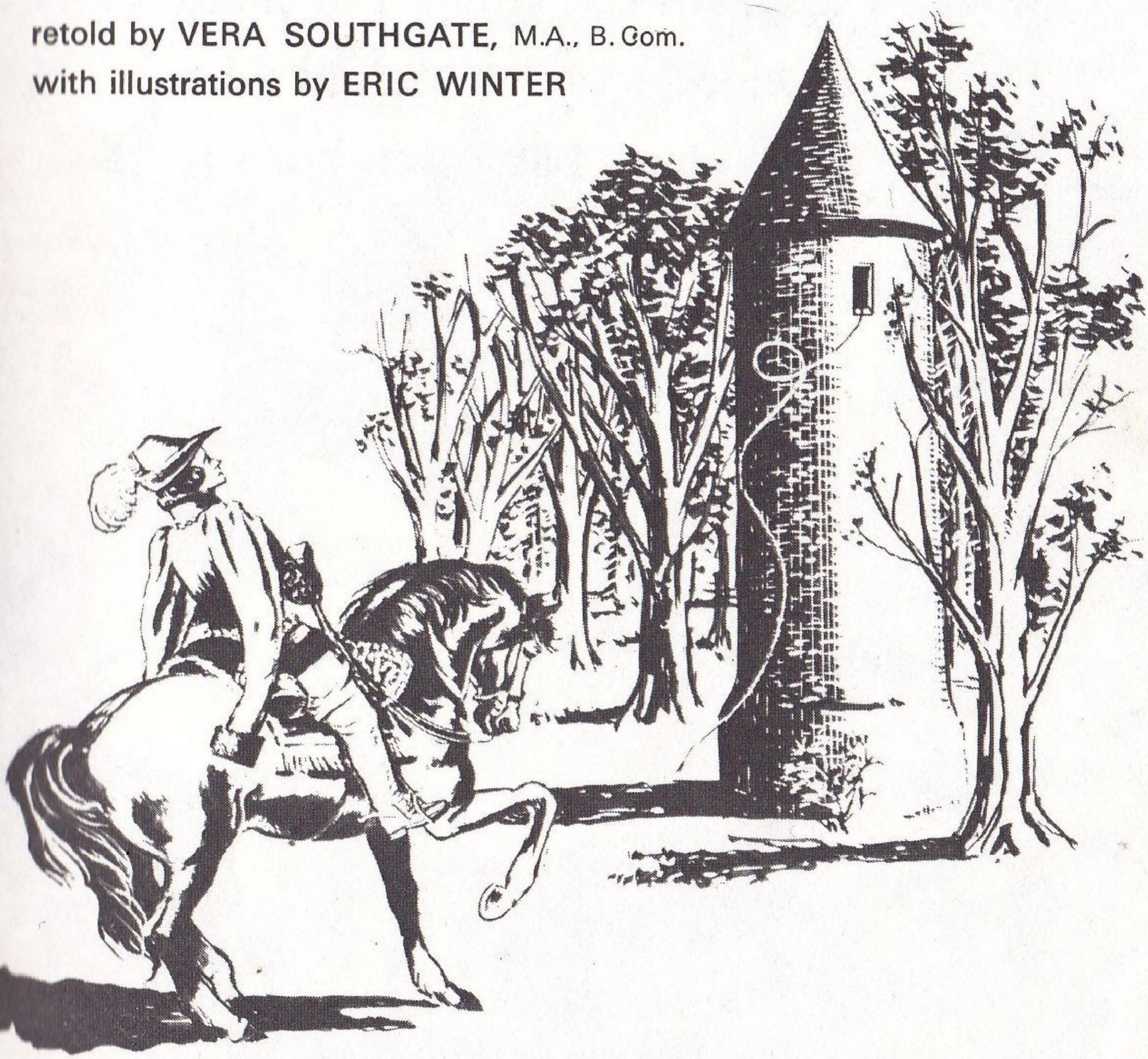
'WELL-LOVED TALES'

Rapunzel

A LADYBIRD 'EASY-READING' BOOK

retold by VERA SOUTHGATE, M.A., B.Com.
with illustrations by ERIC WINTER



Ladybird Books Loughborough

RAPUNZEL

Once upon a time there lived a man and his wife. They had all that they wanted in the world, except for one thing. For many years, they had longed to have a child whom they could love. Yet no baby was born to them.

At the back of their house was a window which looked out over a beautiful garden, full of lovely flowers and fine vegetables.

The garden was surrounded by a high wall. No one ever tried to climb the wall, for the garden belonged to a witch, who was feared by everyone.

One day, the wife stood at this window, looking down into the garden. In one of the vegetable beds, she saw some fresh, green salad. It looked so tempting that she longed to eat some.

Every day that followed, she looked out of the window at the fresh, green salad. The more she looked at it, the more she longed to eat it. Soon she did not want anything else to eat.

She grew thin and pale because she knew she could not have the salad. Her husband grew worried when he saw how thin she had become. "What is the matter with you, dear wife?" he asked.

His wife pointed to the fresh, green salad in the witch's garden. "Ah!" she sighed, "if I cannot eat some of that salad, I shall surely die."

"Rather than let you die," replied the man, "I shall climb into the witch's garden and bring you some salad."

The man waited until twilight, then climbed over the high wall into the witch's garden. There he quickly gathered a handful of salad and scrambled back over the wall.

His wife sat down at once and ate the salad. It tasted even better than she had imagined. It tasted so good that, by the next day, she was longing for more salad. So, once more, her husband felt that he must climb over the wall to fetch it for her.

Waiting until twilight again, the man clambered up the wall and lowered himself into the garden. As his feet touched the ground, he nearly fell down with fright, for there stood the witch in front of him.

"How dare you come into my garden!" she shouted angrily. "And how dare you steal my salad!"

"It was for my wife," replied the poor man. "She longed so much for the salad that, if she could not have had it, she would have pined away and died."

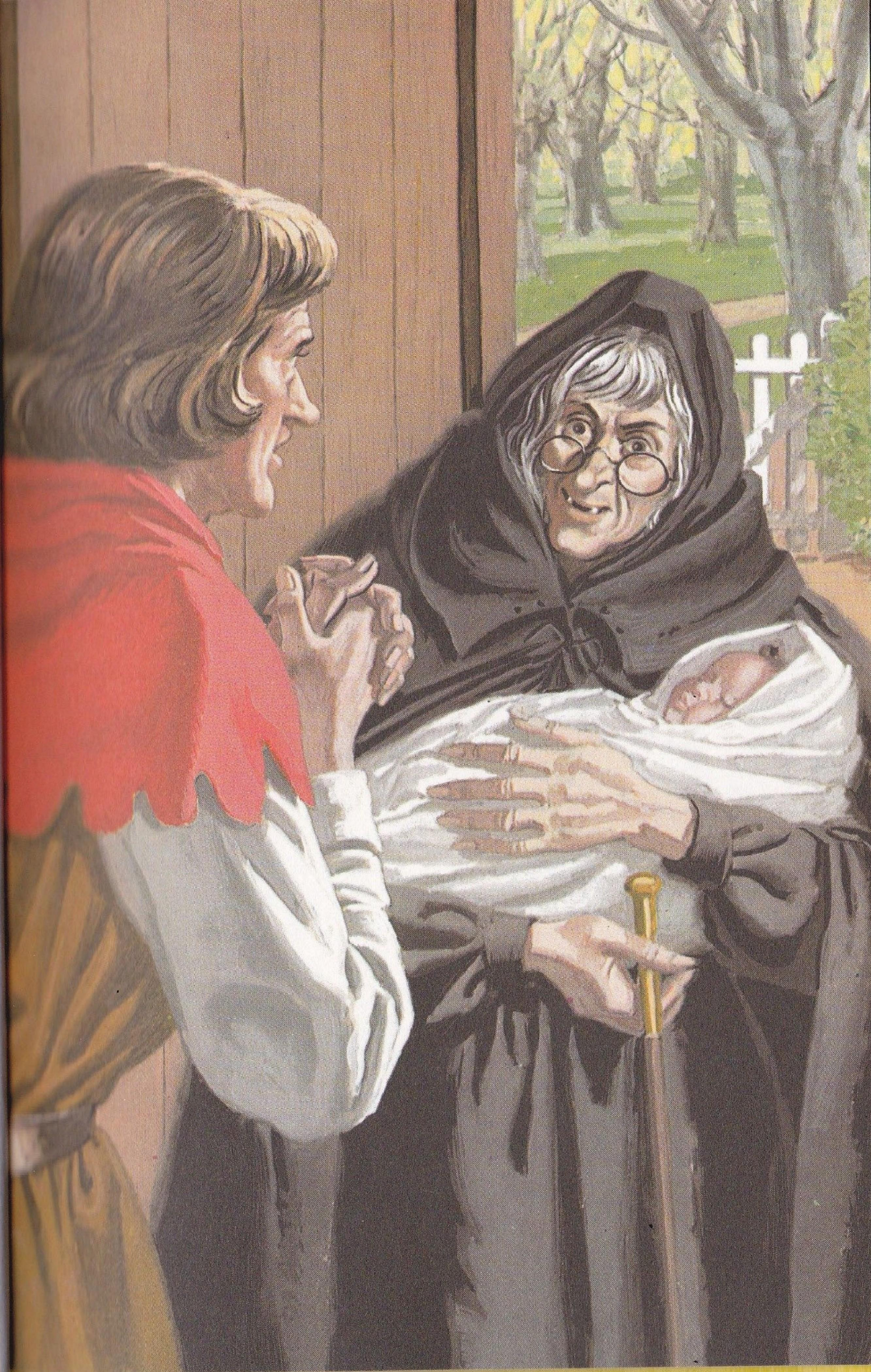
When the witch heard the man's tale, she lost her anger and took pity on him. "If what you say is true," she said, "I will let you take as much salad as you wish, if you promise me one thing. When your wife has a child, you must give it to me. I shall treat it well and look after it like a mother."

The poor man was so frightened that he agreed. Then he quickly gathered an armful of salad and scuttled back to his wife.

Some time later, a beautiful baby girl was born to the man and his wife.

That very same day, the witch appeared. She reminded the man of his promise and she took the child away with her.

The witch named the baby, Rapunzel. As the child grew, she became the most beautiful girl in the world.



When Rapunzel was twelve years old, the witch shut her up in a tower in the forest. This tower had neither a door nor a staircase but, right at the top, there was one small window.

When the witch came to visit Rapunzel, she stood at the foot of the tower and cried,

"Rapunzel, Rapunzel,
Let down your hair."

Rapunzel had wonderful, long, fine hair, the colour of gold. Whenever she heard the voice of the witch, she threw her long plait of hair out of the window. It was so long that it fell right to the ground.

The witch would catch hold of the hair, as if it were a rope. Then she would climb up the wall of the tower and in at the window.

When Rapunzel had been in the tower a few years, it happened that a prince rode through the forest. As he passed by the tower, he heard the sound of someone singing.

The singing was so lovely that the prince stopped to listen. The song came from the top of the tower. It was Rapunzel, singing to herself.

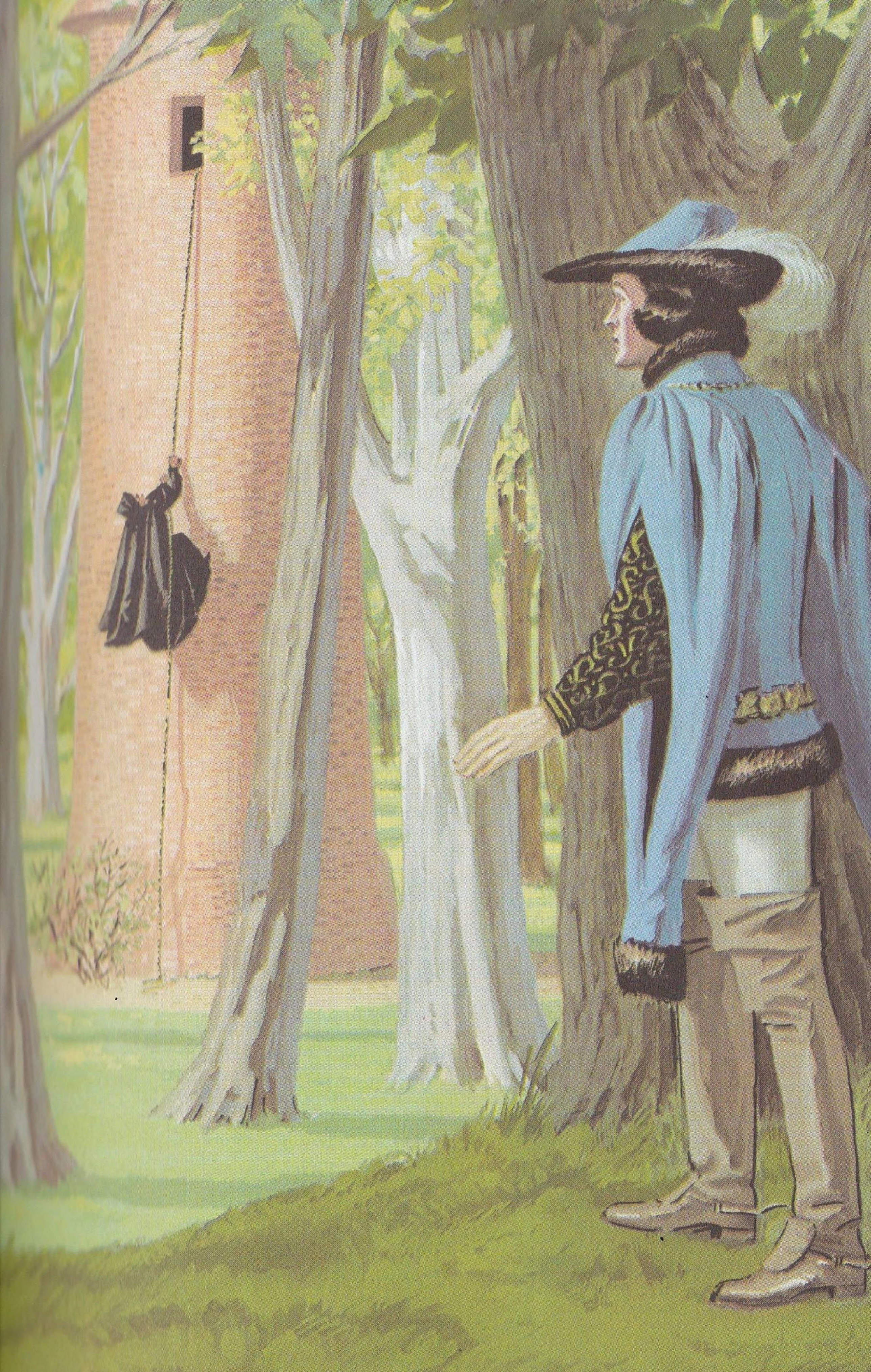
The prince wanted to go into the tower to find the singer. He looked for a door but could not find one, so he rode sadly home.

Yet the prince could not forget the sweet song and he longed to see the singer. Every day he returned to the forest and stood by the tower, listening to Rapunzel singing.

One day, when the prince was standing behind a tree, the witch came to the tower. He heard her say,

"Rapunzel, Rapunzel,
Let down your hair."

Immediately, a long, thick plait of golden hair fell down to the ground. The prince watched, amazed, as the witch climbed up the tower and in at the window.

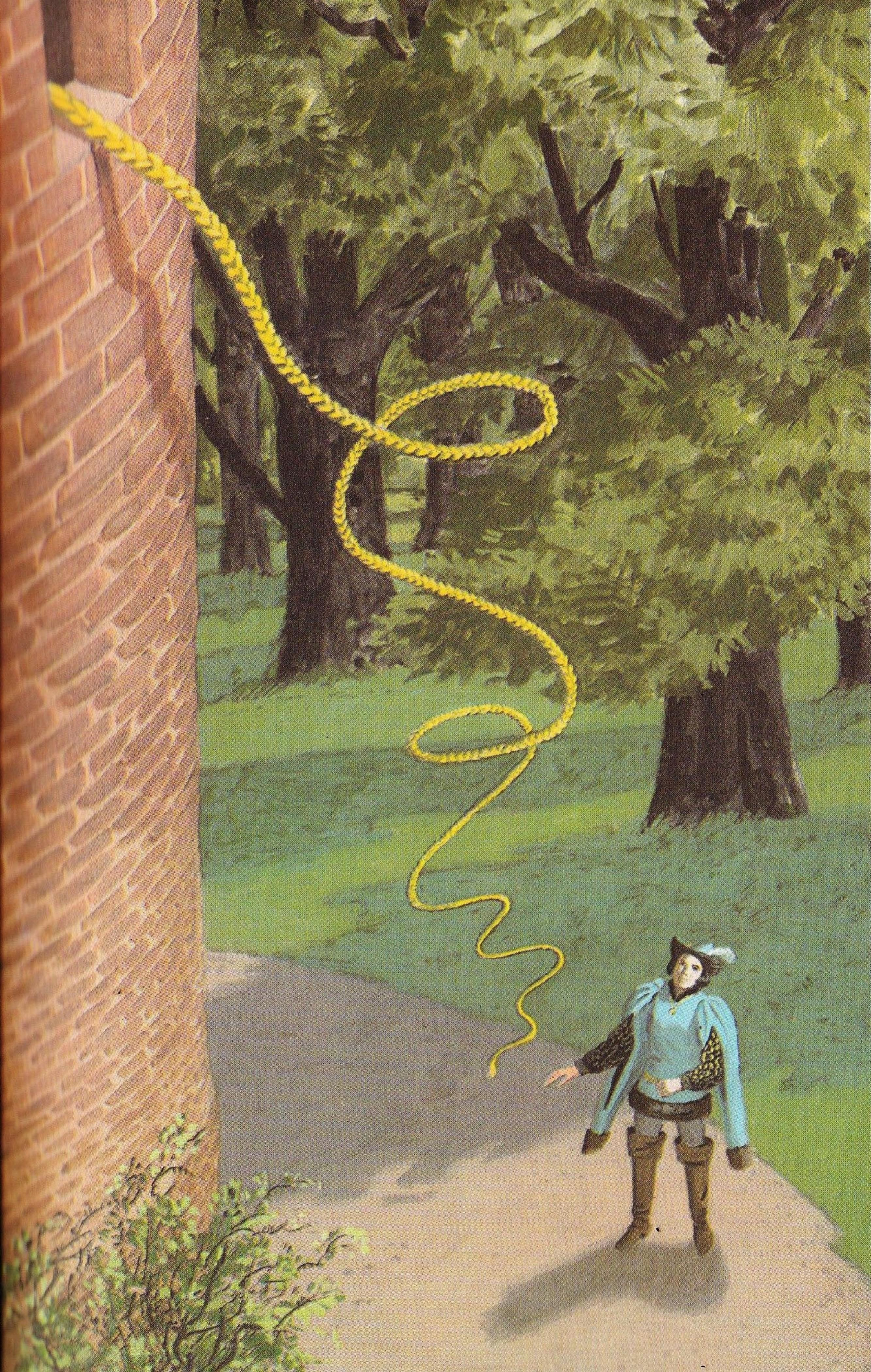


"If that is the ladder by which to enter the tower, then I too will try it," said the prince to himself.

The next day, at twilight, the prince stood by the foot of the tower and cried,

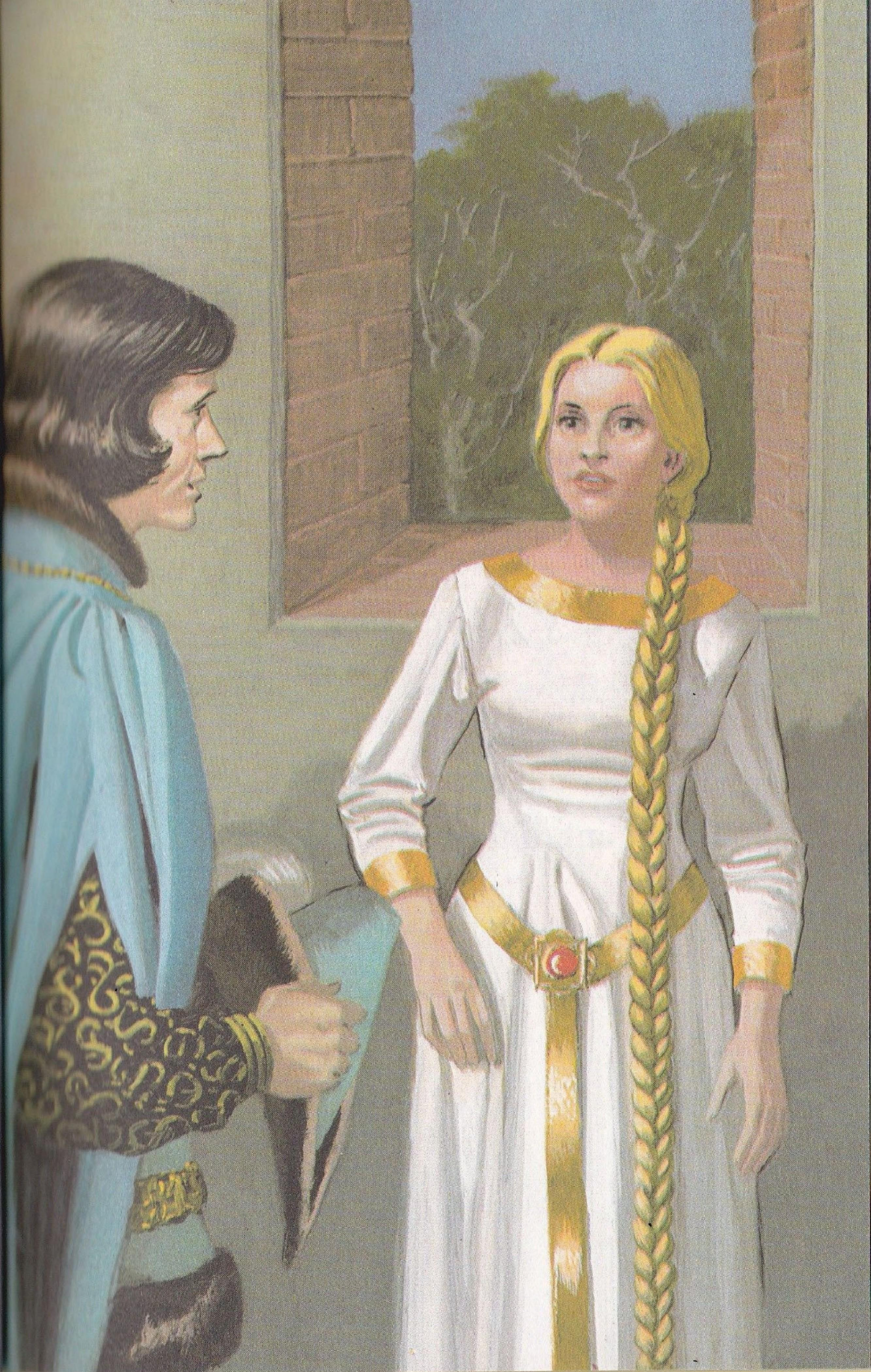
"Rapunzel, Rapunzel,
Let down your hair."

Immediately, the plait of hair came tumbling down and the prince climbed up.



Rapunzel was surprised, and rather afraid, when she found that a man had climbed up to her room in the tower.

As for the prince, when he saw the beauty of Rapunzel, he was overjoyed. He talked kindly to her and she soon lost her fear. He told her how, for many months, he had stood outside the tower every day, listening to her sweet singing.



The prince asked Rapunzel if he might come to visit her again. She replied, "Come to see me each evening, for the witch comes only during the day."

So, for many months, the prince visited Rapunzel every evening and they grew to love each other. After a while, the prince asked Rapunzel to marry him and she replied, "I will gladly do so."

Then they talked together of how Rapunzel could get out of the tower.

At last Rapunzel thought of a plan. "Every evening, when you come to see me," she said to the prince, "bring a skein of silk. I shall weave the silk into a ladder. When it is long enough to reach the ground, I shall come down. Then you can carry me away on your horse."

They agreed on this plan. Every night the prince brought a fresh skein of silk, and every day Rapunzel wove a little more of the ladder.

During all this time, the witch knew nothing of the prince's visits to Rapunzel.

Then one day, after the witch had climbed up the tower by the plait of hair, Rapunzel spoke without thinking. "How is it, good mother," she asked, "that you feel so much heavier than the prince?"

"Oh! You wicked child!" cried the witch. "I thought that I had separated you from all the world. Now I find that you have deceived me!"

In her anger, the witch seized a pair of scissors and cut off Rapunzel's beautiful hair. She then took the poor girl away to a desert, where she left her weeping.

That same night, the witch returned to the tower. She fastened Rapunzel's plait of hair to a hook above the window.

The prince arrived and cried,

"Rapunzel, Rapunzel,
Let down your hair."

Then the witch threw the plait out of the window.

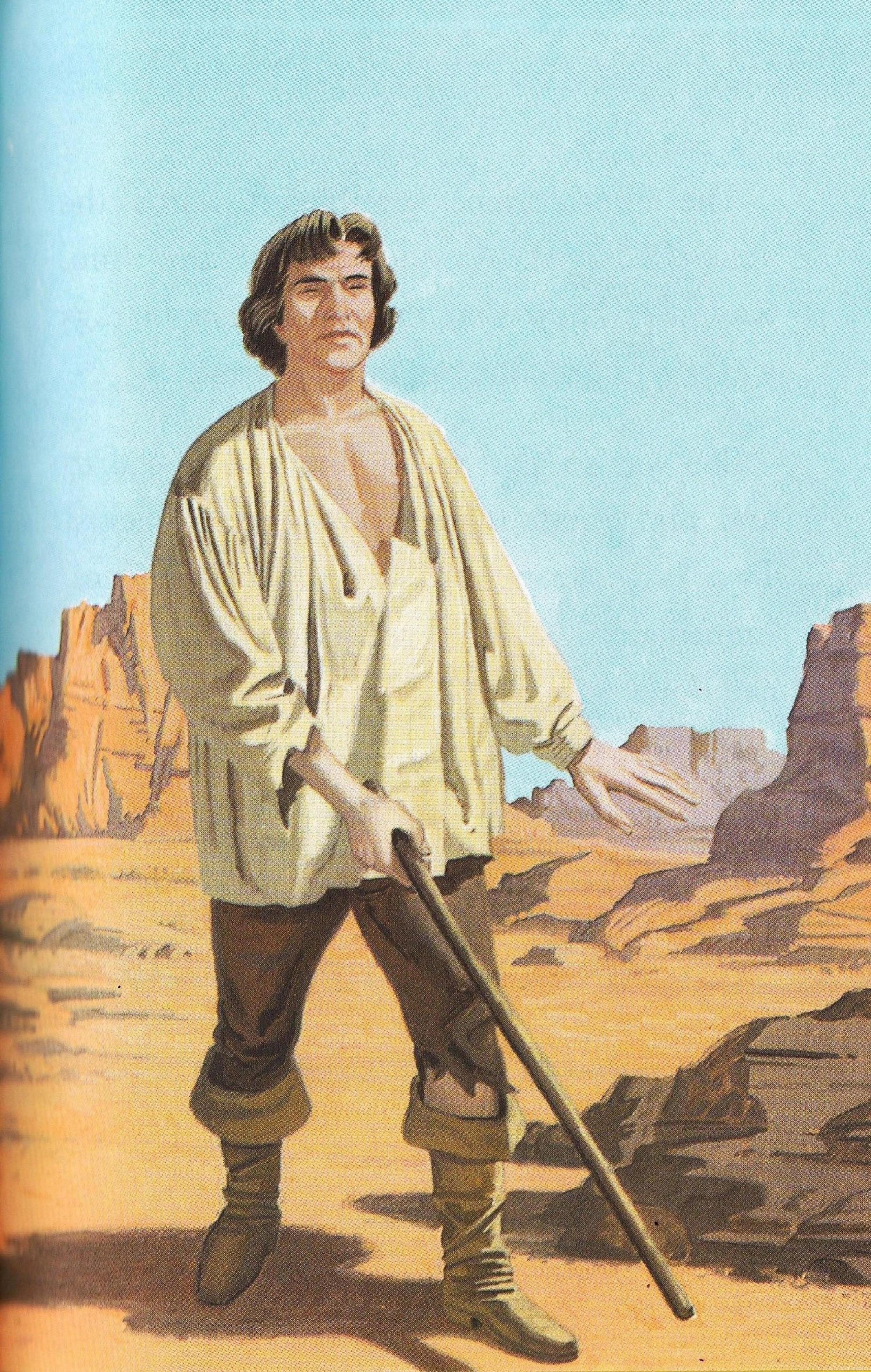
The prince climbed up and found himself face to face, not with his beautiful Rapunzel, but with the angry witch.

"Ah!" cried the witch, mocking him, "You have come to find your lady-love. But she is gone and you will never see her again."

The prince thought that Rapunzel was dead. In his sorrow, he jumped from the high window of the tower and fell to the ground. He was not killed but his eyes were scratched by the thorns among which he fell.

For some years the poor, blind prince wandered sadly through the forest. His only food was the roots and berries he found there. He did not care about anything. His only thought was that he had lost his dear Rapunzel.

At last he came to the desert where Rapunzel lived in sorrow. In the distance, he heard her singing and he knew her voice at once.



The blind prince stumbled towards the voice he loved. As soon as she saw him, Rapunzel knew that this poor man in rags was her prince. She ran into his arms.

She was so glad to see him and so sad to find him blind, that her tears fell quickly. Two large tear-drops fell upon his eyes. Immediately he could see as well as ever he had done.

How happy Rapunzel and the prince were to be together again! It did not matter to them that they were in rags. They forgot the sad years behind them.

Hand in hand, they made their way happily through the forest to the prince's kingdom. There they were married amidst great rejoicing and lived happily ever after.

List of titles in the Ladybird Series 606D (Well-loved Tales)
Graded in order of reading difficulty.

Grade 1

The Elves and the Shoemaker
The Three Little Pigs
The Gingerbread Boy
The Little Red Hen
The Princess and the Pea
The Sly Fox and the Little Red Hen
The Three Billy-goats Gruff
Chicken Licken
The Enormous Turnip
Goldilocks and the Three Bears
The Magic Porridge Pot
The Big Pancake
The Old Woman and her Pig
The Ugly Duckling
The Emperor's New Clothes
Thumbelina
Town Mouse and Country Mouse

Grade 2

Sleeping Beauty
Dick Whittington and his Cat
Puss in Boots
Rumpelstiltskin
Rapunzel
The Wolf and the Seven Little Kids
Little Red Riding Hood
The Musicians of Bremen
Pinocchio
The Golden Goose
Hansel and Gretel

Grade 3

Cinderella
Jack and the Beanstalk
Beauty and the Beast
Snow White and Rose Red
Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs
The Princess and the Frog
Tom Thumb
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Loughborough Leicestershire England

Printed in England

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ISBN 0-7214-0734-X

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